

VCE year 11 history essay

Outcome 2:

“All quiet on the western front”

Write a 750 word essay, addressing the following question:

"Analyse the ways in which the movie "All Quiet on the Western Front" challenges romantic notions of war (including soldiers' experience, honour and patriotism)."

Use evidence from both the film and other sources in your answer.

You could consider such elements as:

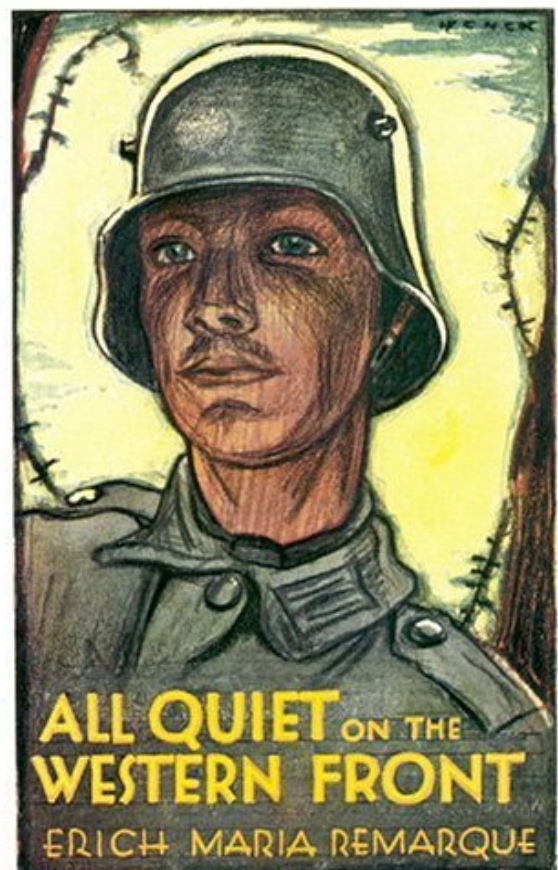
- The relationships between soldiers and their superiors
- Attitudes towards superiors, including the school teacher
- Attitudes to war at home
- Expectations of families
- The soldiers' youthful age and their ideas about war
- Relationships between soldiers
- Friendship, acts of honour, what is honour?
- Attitudes towards the mother country.
- Reasons for war



The above is merely a guide and should not be considered the only issues worthy of discussion.

Word length: 750 words.

Due date:



Watching the movie

Below are some guiding questions which should help you form ideas about the movie and the topic. Use your own words and personal ideas to answer these questions while watching the movie

1. How were the causes of World War One dealt with in this movie?
2. How were the German soldiers represented?
3. How were the Allies represented?
4. Do the soldiers understand why they were fighting?
5. What attitudes towards the authorities are expressed?
6. How much violence is shown, and what response would this evoke?

History essay writing

We set essays because we want to help you improve your writing skills and your ability to think creatively, systematically and analytically. This is a skill which you will use in Year 12, if you are attending university and you will use it in your future professional life.

In an essay you are expected to present a well-constructed and clearly expressed argument based on evidence.

Writing essays can be challenging. (The word “essay,” when used as a verb, means to try or to attempt.) Producing a good essay requires considerable effort and careful organisation of time and ideas. Inspiration is only a small part of the process, so essays written the night before they are due may be spontaneous, but are unlikely to be thoughtful or thought - provoking.

A good history essay enables you to effectively communicate your ideas to your teacher. However, there are certain processes and procedures to follow.

A history essay must have a clear introduction, a number of paragraphs and a conclusion.

Introduction

An introduction is at the beginning of an essay. As the name suggests, it provides the student with an opportunity to introduce the question/statement at hand. That is, state your contention and then provide brief/concise points (no examples in your introduction). In other words, you are informing the reader that you have understood the essay question and that you will provide reasons/substantiate your contention. You should also define any ambiguous words in your introduction (this is done after your contention)

Structure

- Opening sentence that addresses the question (contention).
- Define any ambiguous words/terms in the statement or question.
- Briefly outline 3-4 points that you will expand on and discuss in your paragraphs.
- Tying off sentence that reiterates your contention, your opinion.

Paragraphs

Each paragraph requires you to elaborate on the idea that you briefly outlined in your introduction. As a general rule, one paragraph equates to one topic idea. Each paragraph begins with a topic sentence. It is in the paragraphs that you present supporting evidence/quotes/facts etc to strengthen your argument. Each paragraph should be approximately 12 lines in length.

Structure of paragraphs

- Topic sentence
- Explain/discuss topic sentence
- Use examples (from both the movie and historical facts)
- Linking sentence back to contention

Conclusion

A conclusion allows you to sum up what you have written in your paragraphs. You do this by reiterating the points in your essay but it is not an opportunity to introduce new points or ideas. This should have been done in your paragraphs. In a sense, a conclusion is your last chance to try and convince the reader that what you have been arguing is true or false.

Structure of conclusion

Reiterate your contention – be affirmative

Present your points of discussion by way of re-affirmation (but rephrase where possible)

Tying off sentence

Remember, history essays are based on fact, not fiction, and supported with evidence through examples from the movie and from historical fact.

Do not use metaphors or attempt to be creative. It is not an English essay.

Planning an essay

It is not easy to write an essay off the top of your head, particularly within time constraints. My advice is to spend some time planning what you intend to write. Your plan can be done in point form and shouldn't be any longer than 50 words. A plan gives you a focus when you are writing your essay and also allows you to jot down some quotes or facts which you may otherwise forget. If you run out of time, the teacher may also refer back to your plan and you can pick up some valuable marks.

Sentence structure

If you are unsure about where to use certain types of punctuation, always resort to using short, concise sentences. You will not be penalised for doing so. In fact, it often works to your advantage.

Spelling

If you are unsure about how to spell a word, look it up in the dictionary or on your computer. There is no excuse for misspelling a word that is in the essay question or your textbook! I will assume that is just being lazy.

Punctuation

If you do not know where and how to use certain types of punctuation, don't use it! This can be avoided by using short sentences. If you are unclear, ask your teacher.

Abbreviating words

Don't assume you can abbreviate words at your leisure. You must write out the full word first then put the abbreviation in brackets. Once you have done this you may use the abbreviation.

E.g. World War one (ww1)

Also, avoid writing etc, ie. and so on. You must write 'for example', 'that is'

Use of facts/quotes/statistics

Without supporting examples/facts/quotes/statistics, your essay lacks substance. You must incorporate these into your essay to demonstrate to the reader that you can back-up your opinion with evidence.

Grammar

Never use 'i, we, us, you' in an essay. You are writing in the third person. This means that you present information based on historical evidence. You are in Year 11 now, so confusing words like *their/they're/there* and *it's* and *its* is not acceptable.

Command terms

Command terms are words used in statements, questions and quizzes. They direct you to the way in which a question should be answered. It is important that you are aware of the meaning of these words as they are used in all year levels in the Humanities department.

Humanities LA 2009 - Command Terms and Definitions	
Account for	Give reasons for why something exists or occurs
Analyse	Show the essence of something by breaking it down and examining each part critically. Clarify any relationship between each part.
Assess	Make a judgment about the value, quality, outcomes or results of an argument.
Compare / contrast	Describe the similarities / differences between two or more things.
Define	Give a clear and precise meaning of a given word, term or concept. (using examples here often helps even if not specifically asked for)
Describe	Present the characteristics of a particular topic. Give a detailed account (often emphasising the most important features). PQE can be used in this instance.

Discuss	Offer a considered and balanced review of a particular topic. Opinions or conclusions should be presented clearly and supported by evidence and argument. Use arguments, debate, give reasons for and against, consider the implications
Explain	Give reasons why a situation exists or process occurs.
Examine	Consider an argument or concept in a way that uncovers the assumptions and interrelationships of the issue.
Evaluate	Make an appraisal by weighing up strengths and limitations.
Identify	Recognise and state briefly a distinguishing fact or feature.
Justify	Give reasons for your choice or decision.
Outline	Give the main features or general principles of a topic, omitting minor details and emphasising structure and connections
To what extent	Evaluate the success or otherwise of an argument or concept. Opinions and conclusions should be presented clearly and supported with empirical evidence and sound argument.

Helpful ways to begin an essay

It is true to suggest.....

Historical evidence supports.....

It is debatable as to whether.....

There are a number of reasons why this statement is true/false.

Helpful ways to begin a conclusion

It has been shown that.....

There is no doubt.....

It is without a shadow of a doubt.....

Strong evidence supports the theory.....

Assessment criteria

It is very important that you carefully read the assessment criteria so that you know what is expected of you.

(See next page)

VCE HISTORY ESSAY CRITERIA SHEET

Mark Range	Descriptor
19-20	A tightly controlled, sophisticated argument with excellent use of language and grammar. It is well-structured with a clear use of topic sentences at the beginning of each paragraph and terms have been defined in the introduction. The response stays relevant to the question throughout and is supported by relevant source material, including quotes and other forms of evidence.
17-18	A well-structured essay with clear topic sentences. The response stays relevant to the question and is supported by source material in each paragraph. Use of language and grammar is highly commendable throughout the essay.
15-16	An organised and well-structured essay. The response stays reasonably relevant throughout and is supported by some evidence. Language and grammar are commendable throughout the essay. There is a clear introduction and conclusion.
13-14	A relevant response that remains on track with some attempt at an argument. The response is supported in part by source material. It is generally well-structured with an attempt made to use topic sentences.
10-12	The response shows some connection to the question. It contains some information that is relevant to the topic, but the use of evidence is minimal. Structure is generally sound but may require some development.
7-9	The response makes minimal attempt to address the question. It contains barely relevant information with no supporting evidence. Few examples of knowledge are used.
0-6	Response is structurally incorrect and does not address the question. It contains little or no information.